2006–2007

Saskatchewan

Provincial Budget

Performance Plan

Saskatchewan Labour

2007-00012

Ministers' Message

It is our pleasure to present the annual performance plan for the Department of Labour for 2006-07 and beyond.

Saskatchewan Labour is helping to build a prosperous province that enjoys the many benefits of safe and healthy workplaces and the full equality of women. After celebrating Saskatchewan's Centennial Year in 2005, we are now confidently beginning the next century of achievement.

The world of work is changing rapidly. Globalization, technological advances and changing provincial demographics have created new employment relationships as well as new challenges for Saskatchewan Labour as it carries out its mandate to maintain safe, healthy and fair workplaces. Today in Saskatchewan more people are at work doing more jobs, in more diverse circumstances and workplaces, than at any previous time in our history.

Since the beginning, women have made many important contributions to building Saskatchewan and have played key roles in securing the success and prosperity that now characterize our province. While much has been accomplished in pursuit of full equality for women, much also remains to be done. It is our hope that history will record Saskatchewan's second century as the century in which all of its citizens were able to participate fully in the life of the province and fairly share its benefits.

As in previous years, the key actions outlined in this year's performance plan represent fundamental undertakings that we are committed to seeing implemented. A report on the Department's actual progress toward these goals will be published in July 2007.

Saskatchewan Labour is eager to continue working with its partners in the women's community and the labour and business sectors. We are confident that by working together we will be able to take full advantage of the opportunities that 2006-07 presents.

David Forbes
Minister of Labour

Joan Beatty
Minister Responsible for the
Status of Women

Who Are We

The mandate of the Department is to ensure safe, fair and productive workplaces in Saskatchewan. The Department's authority is derived through key legislation, including, *The Trade Union Act, The Labour Standards Act, The Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993,* and *The Construction Industry Labour Relations Act.* The mandate is further supported through programming, which focuses on prevention, education and training services; promoting, developing and enforcing occupational health and safety and labour standards; providing support to injured workers; and assisting in preventing and resolving workplace disputes. The Department also provides strategic direction and leadership to government on issues that impact women. The Department works in partnership with all other provincial departments and Crown Corporations towards the goal of equality for all Saskatchewan women. The Department, through the Status of Women Office, is responsible for monitoring and reporting on the *Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women.*

Saskatchewan Labour works with employees and employers in a variety of ways to help ensure positive workplaces and prevent negative outcomes within work environments. The Department has 178.3 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) staff positions in offices in Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Estevan, Moose Jaw, North Battleford, Swift Current and Yorkton. Our mission reflects the realization that a thriving economy depends upon a shared commitment to safety, co-operation and equity by all employees and employers.

The Department's activities are categorized into seven main areas that focus on achieving our vision of healthy workplaces and the equality of women and our goals that support the economic and social development of the Province.

LABOUR RELATIONS AND MEDIATION

The Labour Relations and Mediation Division provides information, training, bargaining assistance and mediation to labour and management in unionized workplaces. The Division assists unions and management to resolve difficult labour disputes and work stoppages due to strikes and lockouts. Conciliation is provided to parties involved in collective bargaining disputes. Grievance mediation helps parties resolve issues prior to the arbitration stage. The Division also helps parties improve communication and enhance, as well as rebuild, both working and barga ng relationships. The Division assists parties with interest based negotiation (IBN), and grievance and workplace mediation, in order to prevent workplace conflict or resolve existing conflict. It delivers training to unionized workplaces in the areas of IBN and Conflict Resolution, to improve participants' problem-solving skills.

LABOUR STANDARDS

The Labour Standards Branch provides services to Saskatchewan employers and employees in support of fair and equitable workplace practices. The Branch's aim is not only to enforce the legislation, but also to ensure employees and employers are aware of their rights and responsibilities under these laws. The Branch: investigates wage-related complaints; responds to anonymous third-party complaints where there is evidence of non-compliance; works with affected parties to resolve labour standards concerns; maintains a toll-free inquiry call center during business hours and a 24-hour automated messaging system containing core information with the opportunity to leave a message for response at a later time; responds to requests for the Branch's position on specific fact situations and will suggest options meeting the requirements of the legislation that are suitable in the circumstances; develops and disseminates targeted, industry specific, information tools to inform employers and employees about their rights and responsibilities in the workplace; supports Saskatchewan Labour's website to ensure current and relevant information is available; and undertakes a variety of pro-active initiatives to encourage and ensure compliance.

More broadly based educational programming involves strategic development, delivery and distribution of integrated programs and educational resources to address the principles of fair workplace practices. It works in partnership with a broad base of stakeholders, including: government; educational institutions; Aboriginal organizations; community-based organizations; and business and labour groups.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Occupational Health and Safety Division works to improve workplace health and safety through five inter-related and complementary strategies embodied in the *Action Plan for Healthy and Safe Workplaces*. These include: increasing employer/worker involvement in reducing workplace hazards; enforcing standards through workplace inspections and other enforcement tools; providing workplaces with technical support to identify and reduce hazards in such areas as air quality, radiation and ergonomics; providing youth and future workers with health and safety orientation before reaching the workplace; and increasing public awareness that health and safety must be part of workplace culture. Further information is available on the web at www.worksafesask.ca.

The Occupational Health and Safety Division receives advice on these strategies from three provincial advisory groups: the Occupational Health and Safety Council; the Farm Health and Safety Council; and the Radiation Health and Safety Committee. To deliver the education and enforcement initiatives, we work in partnership with such organizations as Saskatchewan Worker's Compensation Board, the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Learning, Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety and the Human Resources Development and Skills Canada.

The Occupational Health and Safety Division focuses its education services on assisting with integrating health and safety information into curricula and providing resources. The *Ready for Work* program has been developed for secondary and post secondary curricula; and *Grow Up With Safety* has been developed for the younger grades and includes a rural and community farm focus.

Saskatchewan Labour and the University of Saskatchewan signed a five-year agreement in September 1999, and extended it for an additional year in August 2005, whereby Saskatchewan Labour provides annual funding to the University of Saskatchewan, Department of Medicine, to provide three services: Occupational Health Physician, Chief Occupational Medical Officer (COMO), pursuant to section 79 of *The Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993;* Occupational Health Clinic; and research and education on occupational health and safety issues.

The Occupational Health Clinic's activities are guided by an Advisory Board whose members include one representative from the Occupational Health and Safety Division, Saskatchewan Labour, one worker representative from the OHS Council, one employer representative from the OHS Council, one representative from the Saskatchewan Medical Association and one from the University of Saskatchewan.

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) promotes a safe and healthy working environment by providing information and advice about occupational health and safety. Saskatchewan Labour provides annual funding to the CCOHS to provide Saskatchewan workplaces with the opportunity to access this information and advice at no cost.

A tripartite council representing governments (federal, provincial and territorial), employers and labour governs the CCOHS. The Executive Director of the OHS Division is the Province's representative on the Council of Governors.

WORKER'S ADVOCATE

The Office of the Worker's Advocate provides assistance to and representation for any worker, or a dependent of a worker, who has suffered an industrial accident or disease and who is involved in a dispute with the Workers' Compensation Board concerning a compensation claim. The Worker's Advocates represent injured workers or their dependents at all levels of appeal with the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB). While the main focus is the representation of workers through the appeals process, the unit also assists injured workers or their dependents in any way that enables them to obtain the benefits to which they are entitled, without having to take the dispute through the formal appeals process on their own.

WORK AND FAMILY

The Work and Family Unit uses a capacity-building approach, which provides practical assistance to Saskatchewan employers, employees and community organizations to deal with issues of stress and fatigue that arise out of the lack of balance between work and family. This assistance includes workplace consultation services, training, and application of practical tools for creating workplaces that are more family-friendly as well as a range of educational and knowledge transfer services that assist employers and employees to work towards change that is suitable for their workplaces. The Unit develops workplace recognition events such as the *Saskatchewan Work and Family Balance Awards*, and emergent opportunities for employers to discuss their work-family balance innovations. The Unit also facilitates partnership groups that focus on work-family issues at the local level.

PLANNING AND POLICY

Economic development and growth in Saskatchewan is strongly influenced by fair and balanced labour legislation. The Planning and Policy Division works with employees, employers and the associations that represent them, as well as community-based organizations and the general public, to ensure that policies, legislation and regulatory frameworks balance the interests of employees and employers by promoting and regulating healthy and safe workplaces, co-operation and employer and employee rights and responsibilities in Saskatchewan. The Division also collects and disseminates statistics and other information on conditions of labour in Saskatchewan.

STATUS OF WOMEN

The Status of Women Office provides strategic direction and leadership to government on policy direction affecting the status of Saskatchewan women. In partnership with all government departments and the Crown Corporations, the goal is to achieve economic and social equality for Saskatchewan women. The *Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women* provides a framework to guide the government in addressing women's equality issues in the Province. Through the Interdepartmental Committee of Advisors on Women's Policy, individual departments and agencies are responsible for ensuring that women's issues are considered in government's decision-making. The Office is a single window into government for women's organizations and fosters relationships with community stakeholders. Facilitating positive communication linkages with the women's community assists in having women's issues reflected in government activities and initiatives.

Meeting performance objectives requires that the Department work closely with key partners in the delivery of services on behalf of the Department.

This performance plan discusses many of the issues confronting the Department, and outlines a blueprint for how it will continue to promote healthy and safe, family-friendly, fair and equitable workplaces and the economic and social equality of women in a growing economy.

For more information about the organization of the Department, its programs and legislation, please visit our websites outlined in the "For More Information" section.

Plan at a Glance

This is the fifth performance plan publicly released by the Department of Labour; it builds on the 2005-06 plan released with the 2005-06 budget. The performance plan will evolve over time as the strategic planning, performance management and public reporting processes mature and stakeholder feedback is incorporated.

The goals and objectives identified in the plan are multi-year in nature. Over time we will work towards achieving our objectives in support of meeting our broader, long-term goals. A series of key actions for the 2006-07 fiscal year has been developed that support advancement towards achieving our objectives. In addition, a set of performance measures (outlined below) has been developed that will be used to gauge our progress in achieving our objectives. The Department will report on actual progress at year-end in the 2006-07 Annual Report.

OUR VISION – A prosperous Saskatchewan that benefits from healthy workplaces and the equality of women

GOAL 1

Fair workplaces

OBJECTIVE 1 – *Increased awareness of, and adherence to, labour standards legislation*

Performance Measure

- Per cent of the non-agricultural workforce that filed a complaint with the Labour Standards Branch

GOAL 2

Co-operative workplaces

OBJECTIVE 1 – *Facilitate the timely resolution of collective bargaining disputes*

Performance Measures

- Per cent of agreements resolved in conciliation without a work stoppage
- Per cent of agreements concluded in conciliation where a strike or lockout has occurred
- Per cent of grievances resolved in mediation

GOAL 3

Healthy and safe workplaces

OBJECTIVE 1 – *Improved workplace health and safety*

Performance Measures

- Per cent of Saskatchewan workers who are working in provincially regulated workplaces (with ten or more workers) that have occupational health committees
- Lost-time injury rate for workers covered by Workers' Compensation
- Per cent of practical and applied arts high-school students receiving occupational health and safety orientation as part of the *Ready for Work* program

OBJECTIVE 2 – *Improved work-family/life balance*

Performance Measures

- Number of workplaces/organizations that request assistance in becoming aware of work and family issues
- Number of work and family community-based partnerships
- Number of workplaces that we are assisting to make sustained culture change through application of *The Family-Friendly Workplace Portfolio*

OBJECTIVE 3 – *Fair and timely resolution of Workers' Compensation appeals on behalf of injured workers*

Performance Measures

- Number of files waiting for the services of an Advocate
- Average length of time injured workers must wait for the services of an Advocate

GOAL 4

Equality of Saskatchewan women

OBJECTIVE 1 *– Increased reflection of issues affecting women in government policies*

Performance Measure

- Number of key government staff who have completed gender-based analysis training annually

2006-07 Financial Overview

Saskatchewan Labour will expense $15.68 million to deliver its programs and services throughout the Province in 2006-07.

Department funding supports healthy and safe, fair and co-operative workplaces in Saskatchewan and the equality of women. Health and safety and labour standards are promoted through prevention, education and training services and through legislative enforcement. The Department provides support to injured workers and assists in preventing and resolving workplace disputes. The Department also works in partnership with other provincial departments towards the goal of equality for all Saskatchewan women. The breakdown of Department spending by program area is shown below:

2006-07 ESTIMATES	*(in thousands of dollars)*
Central Management and Services	$ 5,144
Labour Standards	2,119
Labour Relations Board	823
Labour Relations and Mediation	534
Occupational Health and Safety	6,103
Worker's Advocate	558
Status of Women Office	378
Total Appropriation	$ 15,659
Capital Acquisitions	0
Amortization	21
Total Expense	$ 15,680
REVENUES	$ 9,627
FTE Staff Complement	178.3

Funding to third parties is budgeted at $161,000 for 2006-07 for the University of Saskatchewan (Chief Occupational Medical Officer) and the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety.

The 2006-2007 year includes $300,000 for the Workers' Compensation Act review.

Trends and Issues

The modern workplace is more complex and diverse than that of thirty years ago. Work is undergoing both structural and demographic change. Not only is the very composition of the workforce significantly different, new industries, methods of work and markets have emerged in recent decades that have dynamically altered where, when, by and for whom work is now performed. The following, which illustrate the scope of the issues surrounding the modern workplace, are directly tied to the objectives and actions of the Department of Labour's performance plan.

CHANGING WORK PATTERNS

Though full-time jobs still predominate, part-time, contingent, contract and self employment now comprise a rapidly growing proportion of all work performed. Statistics Canada suggests that 20 per cent to 25 per cent of employed Canadians are in "non-standard" work relationships. Workers in such arrangements have more unemployment and underemployment, more instability of income, less access to employer-provided benefits and are inadequately protected by labour legislation. For the past 30 years, women have consistently represented 70 per cent of the part-time workforce, thus highlighting the necessity to incorporate a gender lens on this workplace issue. Saskatchewan Labour addresses workplace issues by continuously reviewing key labour legislation to ensure that the standards they establish reflect changing patterns of work. The Occupational Health and Safety Council's review of *The Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993* and *Regulations* has concluded and implementation will begin in 2006-07. The report of the Commission on Improving Work Opportunities for Saskatchewan Residents was released on February 16, 2006. The recommendations cover a wide range of issues impacting vulnerable workers including, initiatives to support employment and job security, training and career development, and work and family.

REPRESENTATIVE WORKFORCE

Meeting the needs of the labour market in the face of labour shortages will require greater reliance on Aboriginal people, people with disabilities and visible minority workers who are currently under-represented in the labour force. Aboriginal people, according to Statistics Canada, are the fastest growing segment of Saskatchewan's potential labour pool, having grown from 7.8 per cent of the provincial population in 1986 to 13.5 per cent in 2001. The *Ready for Work* program, which is also used in First Nations schools, helps prepare young people to enter the workforce. One of the most profound changes in the last part of the 20th Century has been the large-scale entry of women into the workforce, increasingly in non-traditional occupations. However, women still represent a very small percentage of the workplace in transportation and construction trades,

and both large corporations and small businesses are encouraging women to consider careers in traditionally male-dominated fields by creating workplace cultures that attract, retain and promote women. Saskatchewan Labour will work with private sector companies, Crown Corporations, and other partners in Saskatchewan to make the business case for increasing women's participation in senior decision-making roles. Initiatives outlined in the *Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women* will work to increase the participation of women in the labour force.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

One critical issue impacted by the changing nature of work is the ability of the current labour regulatory regime to address new demands. The industrial model of work, as characterized by centralized production, fixed work schedules and full-time, permanent work, allows for little flexibility. The "post industrial" model, as characterized by the current growth sectors of knowledge, information and service, globalization and free trade, is dramatically altering the way we work. Periodic reviews of labour legislation including *The Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993,* which concluded in 2005-06, and the review of *The Workers' Compensation Act, 1979,* scheduled to begin in April 2006, ensure that the rules that govern the way we work reflect how we work. The Department is also partnering with the retail industry to increase awareness among employers and employees of their rights and responsibilities in the workplace so they may deal with issues as they arise and before formal intervention by the Department is necessary.

WORKPLACE INJURIES AND ILLNESS

A safe, healthy, family-friendly, fair and equitable workplace is a key contributor to the province's social and economic well-being. Injuries and inequity in the workplace exact a heavy toll on employers and employees, particularly new entrants to the labour force. In 2004, actual client claims (compensation, medical aid and vocational rehabilitation) through the Workers' Compensation Board totaled $211 million (2004 Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board Annual report). These costs reflect that Saskatchewan has one of the highest time-loss injury rates in Canada. Since the launch of Saskatchewan Labour's *Action Plan for Healthy and Safe Workplaces* in September 2003 to address the high number of workplaces injuries, we have seen some progress. Fewer Saskatchewan workers are being injured. Increasingly, the challenge in helping make workplaces safer and healthier will require changing work design and practices to better address the needs of our diverse workforce, including gender, age and cultural factors.

EMPLOYER-EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

Positive employer-employee relations that reflect co-operation and teamwork are essential to meeting the challenges of the changing nature of work, thereby maintaining Saskatchewan's competitive position. Prosperity and economic growth and further development of the provincial economy are dependent on high levels of worker productivity. This can be achieved

through stable labour relations brought about by an open and unimpeded collective bargaining process. Saskatchewan Labour provides conciliation, mediation and grievance mediation services, as well as training to foster improved labour/management communications and relationships to prevent work stoppages.

BALANCING WORK AND FAMILY/LIFE

A substantial increase in the number of dual-earner families has intensified the stress and fatigue many employees experience as they attempt to balance their work-family/life responsibilities. Research shows that work-family conflict impacts on the economic well-being of business and service organizations in the private, public and non-profit sectors. Research now also shows that young employees tend to be interested in achieving work and family balance, and that family-friendly workplaces are likely to become a critical recruitment and retention factor in the context of labour force shortages. Very recent research now documents specific increases in health care utilization, which are tied to work family stress in Canada. This has stimulated both employee and employer interest in government taking a lead to assist them to address this issue. Through the Work and Family Unit, the Department provides practical assistance to Saskatchewan employers, employees and community organizations as they move towards creating more family-friendly workplaces.

ADVANCING EQUALITY FOR SASKATCHEWAN WOMEN

Women play a key role in the economic, social, political and cultural development of Saskatchewan; however, they still face barriers that prevent them from participating fully. Issues such as labour force attachment, income and earnings, violence in the home and harassment in the workplace, adequate housing and health care, employment and training needs, balancing work and family, women's care-giving responsibilities for children and the elderly, not only affect women and their families, they affect society as a whole and governments at all levels. Addressing these issues in a meaningful way is a major challenge for the Government and requires a high level of co-ordination of many government departments' activities. This role is the responsibility of the Status of Women Office. The framework for addressing these issues is contained in the *Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women*, which was released in October 2003.

Changes from 2005-06 Performance Plan

The Department's plan remains unchanged from its 2005-06 plan.

Goals, Objectives, Actions and Measures

This section provides the detailed 2006-07 Performance Plan for the Department. Under each goal, a number of objectives have been established that support progress towards the broader goal statement. For each objective, a set of key actions that will be completed in 2006-07 has been identified. They are the means for making progress on the objectives. In addition, a set of performance measures has been developed to gauge progress towards the objective.

The following principles guide the Department in the development of policy and delivery of programs and services to support government objectives:

Equity:	Demonstrate and promote the value of representative workplaces
Accountability:	Conduct all Departmental business in an effective, efficient, timely, transparent, consultative and fiscally responsible manner
Respect:	Be culturally and gender sensitive in the development and delivery of policies, programs and legislation
Fairness:	Balance the interests of stakeholders in conducting all departmental business
Quality:	Ensure that proactive, client-focused services reflect social and individual expectations
Recognition:	Acknowledge the valuable contributions staff make in achieving the Department's mandate

GOAL 1

Fair workplaces

***OBJECTIVE 1** – Increase awareness of, and adherence to, labour standards legislation*

Labour standards legislation governs the way people interact with the workplace. It affects and is affected by the community it serves. Globalization of competition, technological advances; changes to the demographic structure of the workforce; work and family responsibility issues; and worker vulnerabilities all affect the workplace. A changing workplace is inevitable.

As change occurs and the workplace adapts, our objective is to ensure that there continues to be workplace support for and adherence to legislated standards. Compliance has a positive effect on the economy as the parties can focus their energies on the goals of the enterprise. Conversely non-compliance leads to disputes and/or complacency that detracts or refocuses the energies away from those goals.

In support of compliance, our initiatives and activities are designed to encourage increased awareness of, and foster adherence to, labour standards legislation. Providing timely access to pertinent labour standards information (in-person, electronically, by telephone, by mail, with paper documents or over the web) that can be used to avoid or resolve workplace concerns, developing and providing individualized responses to workplace circumstances, partnering with educational institutions and industry organizations to disseminate information, targeting non-compliant sectors, and investigating and resolving formal, anonymous and third party complaints; all factor into our compliance strategy.

The awareness of the legislation objective is gauged through routine interaction (meetings, presentations, enforcement activities) with individuals and organizations, as well as periodic focus group testing and stakeholder surveys. Adherence to labour standards legislation is measured by the level of complaints received and the results of targeted initiatives.

Key Actions for 2006-07

- Maintain a toll-free Inquiry-Line Call Centre to provide labour standards information to the 50,000-70,000 workers, employers, and human resource practitioners who call annually.
- Undertake approximately 2,500 Labour Standards Investigations in response to formal complaints. Assess approximately $1.5 million in unpaid wages.
- Continue to accept and investigate anonymous or third party complaints where there is evidence to suggest non-compliance with *The Labour Standards Act* and *Regulations.*
- Print and distribute an information guide for the retail sector, which often provides first work experiences for many new and young workers, to inform employers and employees about their rights and responsibilities in the workplace.
- Monitor the "Working in Saskatchewan" curriculum module on Labour Standards developed in conjunction with SIAST for the Continuing Care Assistant program (formerly Home Care/Special Care Aide program).
- Co-ordinate the government's response to the recommendations of the Commission on Improving Work Opportunities for Saskatchewan Residents.

What are we measuring?	**Where are we starting from?**
Per cent of the non-agricultural workforce that filed a complaint with the Labour Standards Branch	0.5% *[2004-05]*

This measure quantifies the number of complaints received by the Labour Standards Branch divided by the total non-agricultural workforce. Complaints can be further categorized by major industry sectors (Primary, Manufacturing, Construction, Transportation and Warehousing, Trade, Finance, Insurance and Real Estate, Service and Public Administration). The agricultural workforce is not covered by labour standards legislation; therefore, this segment of the workforce has been excluded from the calculation.

Measurement results provide insight into the level of compliance with the labour standards legislation and will assist the Department in reallocating or refocusing resources and efforts towards sectors with unacceptable compliance and complaints rates. The Department can have a significant impact on workplaces found in non-compliance; however, it has a low level of influence on complaints filed. Adverse economic conditions, bankruptcies and insolvencies, which result in the loss of jobs and the non-payment of wages, tend to have a negative impact on the compliance measure.

GOAL 2

Co-operative workplaces

***OBJECTIVE 1** – Facilitate the timely resolution of collective bargaining disputes*

Collective bargaining disputes have an impact on employee-employer relationships, overall worker productivity, the financial position of employers and ultimately the provincial economy. Timely resolution of disputes minimizes the negative impacts caused by disputes. High profile, protracted disputes may require special expertise, which puts pressure on departmental resources and increases program costs.

Key Actions for 2006-07

- Provide conciliation services to employers and unions requesting assistance to resolve disputes and conclude negotiations to establish or renew collective agreements.
- Conduct grievance mediations at the request of the parties to resolve disputes, which involve the interpretation and application of collective agreements.
- Act as an agent for the Labour Relations Board to assist in the settlement of first collective agreements, and provide conciliation or mediation services that are directed by the Board.
- Deliver training sessions to facilitate interest based bargaining and increase knowledge and awareness of conflict resolution skills that can be applied in the workplace.
- Assess and mediate workplace conflict.

What are we measuring?	**Where are we starting from?**
Per cent of agreements resolved in conciliation without a work stoppage	*72% [2004-05]*

We are measuring our ability to assist the parties to move forward in the collective bargaining process, whether that means resolving grievances, concluding collective agreements, or allowing them to make other choices about alternatives such as arbitration versus strikes and lockouts.

Performance results may vary from year to year. Work undertaken by the Labour Relations and Mediation Division is subject to client demand and is cyclical in nature. The Department has no influence on the level of client demand; rather, the parties bear complete responsibility for concluding their own agreement. The role of conciliation is to bridge the differences between the parties and assist them in achieving a settlement.

What are we measuring?	**Where are we starting from?**
Per cent of agreements concluded in conciliation where a strike or lockout has occurred	100% *[2004-05]*

We are measuring our ability to assist parties to negotiate through an impasse or deadlock and achieve a collective agreement that will bring an end to a strike or lock out.

These results may vary somewhat from year to year. The parties may consider using other dispute resolution mechanisms like interest arbitration to achieve final settlement of their differences. When this occurs, the Division would have no impact on the settlement. Mediation can assist the parties to resolve grievances in a great many cases but they retain the option to continue on to arbitration if that process better meets their needs.

What are we measuring?	**Where are we starting from?**
Per cent of grievances resolved in mediation	70% *[2004-05]*

We are measuring our ability to assist the parties to effectively resolve grievances as an alternative to the more expensive, time-consuming arbitration process.

Mediation can assist the parties to resolve grievances in a great many cases, but they retain the option to continue on to arbitration if that process better meets their needs.

Performance results may vary from year to year. Work undertaken by the Division is subject to client demand and is cyclical in nature.

GOAL 3

Healthy and safe workplaces

***OBJECTIVE 1** – Improved workplace health and safety*

Each year, nearly 4.4 per cent of our provincial workforce (*Workers' Compensation Board Annual Report, 2004*) suffers from a work-related injury or illness severe enough to take them off the job. The Province's social and economic well-being depends on healthy and safe workplaces. The Department works to improve workplace health and safety through five inter-related and complementary strategies. These are: engaging employers and workers in reducing workplace hazards; making legal standards for healthy and safe work known and enforcing them; providing workplaces with health and safety services to meet standards, including research, technical services, information, education and training; providing youth and future workers with basic health and safety orientation before entering the workforce; and increasing public awareness to promote healthy and safe practices as part of the community and workplace culture.

Changing demographics and rapid industry growth impact the number of workplace injuries and illnesses, and therefore the focus of different initiatives. For example, the Saskatchewan workforce is generally aging and the injury and illness rates of workers over 45 years of age are increasing. Growth industries, such as the petroleum and mining sectors, tend to have more inexperienced workers who in turn have higher injury rates than more experienced workers.

Key Actions for 2006-07

- Reduce lost-time injuries by five per cent by continuing the focus on the increased number of worksite inspections and providing education, training and technical support on identifying and controlling workplace hazards.
- Develop and support the Saskatchewan workplace responsibility system through engaging employers and workers in reducing workplace hazards by:
  - ~ Supporting the over 4,400 current occupational health committees and adding 300 new committees with a focus on larger, higher-risk workplaces
  - ~ Providing training opportunities to 4,500 employer and worker representatives in 225 courses on the responsibilities of occupational health committees, OHS representatives and supervisors
  - ~ Helping workplaces develop occupational health and safety programs or systems in approximately 1,600 higher-risk workplaces, focusing on 400 workplaces with the highest rate of injuries and illnesses

- Improve compliance with Saskatchewan legal standards for healthy and safe work by:
  - ~ Making sure standards are known and enforced through approximately 4,500 worksite inspections per year, an increase of 50 per cent since the Department's *Action Plan for Safe and Healthy Workplaces* was announced in September 2003
  - ~ Issuing more notices of contravention to ensure standards are met
  - ~ Prosecuting for serious or repeated non-compliance with health and safety standards
  - ~ Implementing the revised standards from the Occupational Health and Safety Council's review of provincial health and safety legislation
- Provide health and safety services for workplaces to meet health and safety standards by:
  - ~ Providing 4,500 technical services in such areas as hygiene, toxicology, ergonomics and radiation with increasing emphasis on ergonomic and radiation safety
  - ~ Undertaking applied research to reduce workplace hazards in at least 10 targeted industries and occupations
  - ~ Enhancing technical support to workplaces to better manage hazards and address emerging issues in workplace conditions and communicable diseases
  - ~ Providing information, education and training through presentations, publications and websites
- Increase healthy and safe work practices as part of community and workplace cultures through:
  - ~ WorkSafe Saskatchewan promotion activities such as the WorkSafe website with over 1,000 articles
  - ~ Partnerships with public and private agencies, such as North American Occupational Safety and Health Week
- Help young people make the transition from school to work by training 160 teachers to deliver work skills education to approximately 4,000 students.
- Undertake a review of *The Workers' Compensation Act, 1979*, to ensure that the compensation system is up-to-date, fair and responsive.

What are we measuring?	Where are we starting from?
Per cent of Saskatchewan workers who are working in provincially regulated workplaces (with 10 or more workers) that have Occupational Health Committees (OHC)	82% *[2004-05]*

Saskatchewan has developed a workplace responsibility system based on the active participation of employers and workers to meet or exceed OHS standards. Committees are a critical part of this self-monitoring system that keeps workplaces safe. They promote workplace safety in several ways, including workplace inspections, education, promotion/awareness initiatives and minutes that record committee activities to resolve workplace hazards. All provincially regulated workplaces with 10 or more workers are required to have OHCs comprised of workers and employer representatives.

The number of workers covered by active OHCs is divided by the estimated number of workers in provincially-regulated workplaces with 10 or more workers. The OHC is a key mechanism to promote worker involvement and shared responsibility for workplace health and safety.

The Department has direct influence over the percentage of workers covered by OHCs to the extent the legislated requirements are enforced. The actual rate of compliance will be impacted by the commitment of employers to implement and support an OHC, particularly in smaller, more transient workplaces.

What are we measuring?	Where are we starting from?
Lost-time injury rate	14,329 workers or 4.40 per 100 workers per year *[2004]*

The lost-time injury rate measures the number of injuries reported to, and accepted by, WCB per 100 Full-Time Equivalent workers. The number of WCB accepted claims in a calendar year involving lost-time from work is divided by the estimated number of Full-Time Equivalent workers based on Statistics Canada industry average wage data and WCB payroll information. As not all workers are covered by WCB, not all workers report injuries or illnesses and the estimated number of full-time workers is a derived number, the rate is a proxy for the actual number of workplace injuries or illnesses. Over the last thirty years, there has been a decline of 30 per cent, but the reported injury numbers and rates were increasing in recent years until 2003. In the last two years, we have seen an 11 per cent decrease. WCB's preliminary data, projects a 14 per cent decrease after three years. A reduction in the number of lost-time claims will be indicative of fewer workers being injured or becoming ill on the job. The Department shares the Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board's target of reducing time-loss injuries by 20 per cent by 2007.

This measure is commonly used in other jurisdictions and provides an indicator of the relative number, type and severity of injuries for most workplaces. The measure is based on WCB statistics and, consequently, some workers, notably most farmers and farm workers, are excluded. The data are based on reported and accepted claims. Also, the data tends to focus on traumatic events, such as injuries rather than illnesses, and as different industries tend to have different reported injury rates, changes in type of employment can affect the overall rate.

The Department has a low level of influence on the overall workplace injury rate. Economic factors among many others influence, on a yearly basis, workplace injuries.

What are we measuring?	**Where are we starting from?**
Per cent of Practical and Applied Arts high school students receiving occupational health and safety orientation as part of the *Ready to Work* program	Approximately 28% *[2004-05]*

Practical and Applied Arts teachers who have been trained in the *Ready for Work* program, which promotes understanding about workplace safety, fairness and co-operation, helps prepare high school students to participate productively in the workplace.

Saskatchewan Labour has no influence over the Practical and Applied Arts courses that are offered in provincial high schools. However, through our ongoing collaborative working relationship with the Curriculum Branch of Saskatchewan Learning, the Department has a moderate level of influence over the training of Practical and Applied Arts teachers in the *Ready for Work* program. It is reasonable to assume that an increase in the number of teachers and students exposed to *Ready for Work* resources will be realized as a result of occupational health and safety and labour standards objectives being included as part of the core curriculum for Career and Work Exploration.

***OBJECTIVE 2** – Improved work-family/life balance*

The significant increase in the number of dual-earner families (and lone-parent families) has intensified the stress and fatigue many employees experience as they attempt to balance the needs of their jobs and their families. Employers' interest has heightened in this issue as research shows that work-family conflict impacts on the economic well-being of business and service organizations in the private, public, and non-profit sectors. Achieving performance targets is very much dependent on the level of commitment employers and employees have in becoming involved, and maintaining that involvement, in a culture change. The Work and Family Unit was established to assist all sectors in the province to strengthen their capacity to develop workplaces that are more family-friendly.

The measures to gauge progress in meeting this objective are output measures. In order to gauge progress in improving work-family/life balance the Department will work on developing an outcome measure.

Key Actions for 2006-07

- Continue to engage with workplaces to implement *The Family-Friendly Workplace Portfolio* (formerly the Work and Family/Life Planner).
- Continue to train groups of workplace representatives (HR Directors, Union Representatives, Managers, Wellness Co-ordinators) about how to use *The Family-Friendly Workplace Portfolio.*
- Develop a sector engagement plan which will involve the identification of opinion leaders in the small business, trade union, aboriginal employers/employees, unionized workplaces, and non-profit sectors, who will be trained to offer leadership on work-family issues in their respective sectors.
- Continue to work with Saskatchewan Learning to implement the work and family aspects of the Early Learning and Care Strategy.
- Facilitate initiatives on lower-waged employees and work-family issues.
- Undertake leadership with the Federal government to promote implementation of non-legislative work-family programming, which was advanced by Saskatchewan Labour with the Federal Labour Standards Review Commission.
- Facilitate the development of ongoing and new research capacity at the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina relative to work-family issues.

What are we measuring?	**Where are we starting from?**
Number of workplaces/organizations that request assistance in becoming aware of work and family issues	14 *[2004-05]*

This measure quantifies the number of workplaces and organizations that request the Department's assistance in becoming aware of work and family issues. Increased workplace knowledge on work and family issues is a precursor to improving work-family/life balance. Measurement results gauge voluntary involvement of employers, employees, and organizations in becoming more family-friendly.

The level of requests is unpredictable and influenced by factors such as other workplace issues, changes in human resource personnel, and availability of management time.

What are we measuring?	Where are we starting from?
Number of workplaces that we are assisting to make sustained culture change through application of *The Family-Friendly Workplace Portfolio*	8 *[2004-05]*

This measure quantifies the number of workplaces the Department is assisting to become more family friendly through application of *The Family-Friendly Workplace Portfolio*. *The Family-Friendly Workplace Portfolio* (print and electronic material) includes guides on change techniques, a local case study, and a set of field-tested instruments, which assess family-friendly strengths, gaps, and employees' priorities for multi-year workplace change objectives. Becoming more family-friendly refers to a process, which develops a family-friendly approach to many aspects of work, including work arrangements, management style and the overall attitudes and values within the work environment. Many factors such as economic well-being and organizational readiness, as well as our limited marketing resources, reduce the level of influence over the measurement results.

What are we measuring?	Where are we starting from?
Number of work and family community-based partnerships	3 *[2004-05]*

This measure quantifies the number of work and family community-based partnerships that have been developed and maintained in Saskatchewan. The capacity building approach of the Work and Family Unit assists representatives from business, labour, community and government sectors to partner in order to undertake public education and specific projects related to the lack of work-family balance. These groups reflect local interests and play a critical role in enhancing workplace and general public awareness about the importance of work-family balance. Whether these groups really 'gel' is a product of numerous contextual factors over which we have little control.

***OBJECTIVE 3** – Fair and timely resolution of Workers' Compensation appeals on behalf of injured workers*

The Office of the Worker's Advocate provides assistance to any injured worker or dependent of any injured worker who has suffered a work related injury and who has a dispute with the Workers' Compensation Board concerning their claim for compensation.

The Worker's Advocates represent workers or their dependents at appeals with the Workers' Compensation Board. In addition to representing workers through the appeals process, the Office of the Worker's Advocate will also assist an injured worker to obtain benefits they are entitled to without taking the dispute through the appeals process.

A work related injury could have a significant impact on a worker and his/her family should the worker not receive the benefits he/she may be entitled to. An early resolution of disputes with the Workers' Compensation Board can minimize the negative financial, medical and family impacts that disputes can cause.

Key Actions for 2006-07

- Continue to streamline processes to ensure that injured workers requesting assistance are dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner.
- Develop new programs to track and analyze the requests the Office of the Worker's Advocate (OWA) receives.
- Continue to analyze the incoming workload to determine the appropriateness of the OWA programs.

What are we measuring?	**Where are we starting from?**
Number of files waiting for the services of an Advocate	55 *[2004-05]*

This measures our ability to provide service to our clients effectively and efficiently. This will allow us to determine resource requirements.

This measure quantifies the number of assigned files in comparison to the total number of files, both assigned and unassigned, being held by the OWA. Providing us with information to gauge the success of the programs we offer as well as ensure our Office has the appropriate amount of resources.

What are we measuring?	**Where are we starting from?**
Length of time injured workers must wait for the services of an Advocate	9 weeks *[2004-05]*

We are measuring the period of time an injured worker has to wait for the services of a Worker's Advocate after he/she has contacted our office to request assistance.

This measures our ability to provide service to our clients in an effective manner. This will allow us to provide services that best suit the needs of injured workers.

GOAL 4

Equality of Saskatchewan Women

***OBJECTIVE 1** – Increased reflection of issues affecting women in government policies*

The Government of Saskatchewan recognizes and appreciates women's diverse contributions to the success and prosperity of this province. Women are capable of playing a key role in the economic, social, political and cultural development of Saskatchewan, but they still face barriers that prevent them from participating fully. Issues such as balancing work and family, women's care-giving responsibilities for children and the elderly, violence in the home and harassment in the workplace, adequate housing and health care, employment and training needs, not only affect women and their families, they affect society as a whole and governments at all levels. Saskatchewan women represent a substantial and valuable pool of human resources. If their collective potential is to be fully realized, governments need to respond to the issues and barriers women confront in ways that are innovative and productive.

It is important to note that some women, particularly Aboriginal women, visible minority women, and women with disabilities, face additional barriers and challenges to achieving equality. Policies and programs, to be fully effective, must respond to diversity as well as gender to facilitate the achievement of all women's full potential.

Through the *Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women*, the government will support initiatives that will assist women to move forward in many aspects of their lives – economically, socially, politically and culturally. The Action Plan identifies key government initiatives under four objectives:

- Economic equality and security of all Saskatchewan women
- Safety for all Saskatchewan girls and women
- Health and well-being for all Saskatchewan women
- Equitable participation of women in leadership and decision-making

Key government policy and decision makers continue to receive gender-based analysis training, which will provide them with the skills and tools to identify how government policies and programs impact women, men and diverse groups of women and men in Saskatchewan.

Key Actions for 2006-07

- Monitor and report annually on progress made on the proposed 57 actions in the *Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women*.
- Deliver a systematic process to guide the integration and monitoring of gender-based analysis (GBA) into government decision-making processes by providing training and education for managers, senior policy analysts, advisors and key government staff.
- Provide expert advice, analysis, and resources to remaining public sector employers and other workplaces undertaking pay equity projects.
- Provide grants to women's organizations to celebrate International Women's day and raise awareness of women's issues.
- Meet annually with women's groups to ensure that women's voices, their issues, ideas and solutions, are considered in the development of government policy that impacts women.
- Develop and deliver a variety of informational materials for women's organizations, other organizations and the public on services for women, statistics on women, funding for projects and gender-based analysis.
- Provide grants to women's organizations and other community organizations for projects that will address women's issues.

What are we measuring?	**Where are we starting from?**
Number of key government staff that have completed gender-based analysis training annually	15 *[2004-05]*

This measure quantifies the number of staff across government who receive GBA training. The quality of the training is also measured through a pre-training assessment and post-training evaluation. Training is important if individual government departments and agencies are to ensure that women's issues are considered as an integral part of their policy development and decision-making processes.

For More Information

If you have any questions or comments about the plan, or would like additional copies, we invite you to call:

Saskatchewan Labour
Communications Branch
(306) 787-3637

Or visit us on-line at:

http://www.labour.gov.sk.ca

- Provides information on departmental programs, news releases, policy initiatives, legislative reviews including discussion papers and reports, and proposed legislative amendments.

For additional information, visit:

http://www.readyforwork.sk.ca

- Provides information for students/workers, teachers and employers regarding rights and responsibilities of workers and employers, labour legislation, a guide for new workers and instructional videos on work. It also provides a list of publications and links to other organizations.

http://www.swo.gov.sk.ca

- Provides information on the role of the Status of Women Office (SWO), government policies pertaining to women, publications available from the SWO, the Saskatchewan Women's Directory Online, statistical updates and links to other organizations.

http://www.workandfamilybalance.com

- Provides information on the Balancing Work and Family Program, recent research in Canada, community-based partnerships, publications and links to other organizations.

http://www.worksafesask.ca

- Provides a collection of information designed to help workers and employers prevent injuries and illness in the workplace. The collection contains hundreds of documents on a wide variety of workplace issues. It also contains information from other public sources.

http://www.sasklabourrelationsboard.com

- Provides information about the Labour Relations Board, board processes, an annual report, the current board agenda, online forms, labour relations legislation, publications and policies and recent board decisions.